1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

taken his fancy, or which, perhaps, he views as a challenge to his skill. In Iban ritual invocations (*timang*), the prowess of their gods and culture heroes in felling immense and primordial trees is a recurrent theme. Tree felling is the one activity of the farming year in which young men revel, and in many cases it is the only stage in which they deign to participate, for after it is over they set off on journeys (*bejalai*), and do not return until the harvest is well advanced and the crop ready to be carried in and threshed.

Figure 3. An Iban *bliong*

88. In tree felling two main tools are used: (*a*) the *bliong*, an hafted adze; and (*b*) the *kapak*, an axe of European type. The *bliong* is the traditional implement of the Iban, and they are expert at forging their own adzes and hafting them to hard-wood shafts with *rotan* lashings (Figure 3). Different men have different notions as to the exact size, weight and shape of adze best suited to felling, and many have a favourite *bliong* that is highly prized for its special qualities. At the beginning of each season the blades are re-forged, new cutting edges formed and tempered, and then ground on large whet stones to a fine pitch of sharpness. Axe-heads of European type, on the other hand, are purchased from Chinese traders, but in most cases they are partly re-forged, and handles of Iban design specially fitted. In passing, it may be noted that the Iban system of agricluture, involving as it does, the felling of large areas of virgin jungle, is dependent on the use of iron tools. Such extensive methods could not be followed by a neolithic people. There is however, no archaeological evidence concerning the neolithic period of the Iban, nor is there any mention in their traditions of stone tools. This is not surprising, for metals were in widespread use in eastern Asia and Indonesia for many centuries prior to the first arrival of Europeans. Our earliest historical accounts of the Iban describe a highly developed material culture based on the use of iron tools. Low, in recording observations made during the years 1845-47, wrote of the Iban: "Iron being necessary in the formation of their